

VZCZCXYZ0009
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLC #0049/01 0291340
ZNY CCCCC ZZH (CCY AD740C91 MSI9348-695)
P 291340Z JAN 07 ZDS
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9541
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0378
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0968
RUEHKE/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 1355
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0651
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0332
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0944
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0417
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0855
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0757
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0653
RHMFISS/COMUSNAVEUR NAPLES IT
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 000049

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D COPY - Correcting text in paragraph 6

ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
KINSHASA ALSO FOR BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2117
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MASS](#) [GB](#) [TP](#) [AO](#)
SUBJECT: GULF OF GUINEA COMMISSION SECGEN READY TO ASSUME
RESPONSIBILITIES

REF: 2006 LIBREVILLE 00560

Classified By: Ambassador Barrie Walkley for reasons 1.4 b and d

11. (U) SUMMARY. The treaty establishing the Gulf of Guinea Commission was ratified in 2006 by the requisite number of states and the Gulf of Guinea Commission entered into force. The Commission -- comprising Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Sao Tome and Principe, the Republic of Congo, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo -- can be a useful vehicle for addressing maritime security concerns throughout the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. There have been problems establishing the Commission HQ in Angola. The first head of the Commission is Carlos Gomes of Sao Tome and Principe; deputies from Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria have not yet been named. END SUMMARY

12. (U) In February, 2001, a treaty establishing the Gulf of Guinea Commission was signed by the heads of state of Gabon, Equatorial Guinea (EG), Cameroon, Sao Tome and Principe (STP), the Republic of Congo, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Gabon was the primary force behind the Commission, which can be a useful vehicle for addressing maritime security concerns (the individual states of this oil-rich region currently lack the capacity to police their own waters and have no other mechanisms to promote maritime security jointly). EUCOM has had consistent interest in the formation of the Commission.

13. (U) In order to enter into force, the treaty required ratification by two thirds of the parties (i.e., six of the eight signatories). In 2006, Angola became the sixth country to ratify the treaty (joining Gabon, Nigeria, EG, STP and Congo). Cameroon, now that the Bakassi peninsula dispute is settled, is (according to the Gabonese) ready to pursue ratification; RDC's parliament undoubtedly has more urgent matters to consider for the time being.

14. (U) According to Foreign Minister Jean Ping, not all countries have yet deposited ratification documents with Gabon; nonetheless, the treaty is in force and the Gulf of

Guinea Commission exists -- at least legally.

¶5. (U) When the Commission was proposed, it was determined that the HQ would be in Gabon and that the Secretary General of the Commission would be former president of Sao Tome and Principe, Miguel Trovoada, with Deputy SecGens from EG and Nigeria. (FYI: Miguel Trovoada was so interested in the job that he decided not to run in the 2006 STP presidential elections.) However, at a meeting in Libreville in August 2006, Angola offered to provide a Luanda office building for the Commission and a residence for the SecGen -- and also to pay all Commission operating costs for the first year. The offer was accepted.

¶6. (C) At that point, STP President Fradique de Menezes refused to endorse Miguel Trovoada for the SecGen position. De Menezes, who has notoriously poor relations with Dos Santos, was unhappy that the HQ would be in Luanda with a political enemy, Trovoada, at its head. De Menezes did not object to Trovoada's being in Libreville (in fact, he saw it as a useful way to keep Trovoada out of STP). For de Menezes, the problem with having Trovoada in Luanda was that Trovoada has been a lifetime leader of the MLSTP, a political party opposed to de Menezes and long supported by Angola. De Menezes feared that Trovoada and Angola would jointly work to undermine him.

¶7. (U) As a compromise, Carlos Gomes -- also from STP-- was selected as the Commission SecGen. It was decided that Gomes would visit Libreville to be "anointed," in a sense, by Omar Bongo before officially assuming his duties. (The meeting with Bongo -- the prime force behind the Commission -- is seen as the equivalent to a swearing-in.) Gomes visited Luanda in November 2006 and complained that the residence he was being offered by the Angolans was far from the city and would require too much commuting time. According to STP

Presidential Chief-of-Staff Nando Rita, the problem has now been solved and Gomes is ready to assume his responsibilities. Gomes has not yet been to Libreville for the meeting with Bongo. Neither EG nor Nigeria has presented the names of the Dep SecGen candidates.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: It is encouraging that the Gulf of Guinea Commission Sec Gen is finally ready to assume responsibilities. The Commission is the only regional organization that combines an ECOWAS country (Nigeria) with CEEAC states. It is uncertain, however, how effective the body will be in approaching matters such as regional maritime security. It is also uncertain how effective Carlos Gomes will be as SecGen (he unfortunately does not have the stature of Miguel Trovoada, who was president of STP from 1991 to 2001 and is well-known throughout the eight countries making up the Commission).

WALKLEY